

## **It Is Finished!**

**Friday, April 18, 2025**

### **Good Friday Service**

How many of you were around when the Tim Hortons in downtown Bemidji closed and was replaced by Dunkin' Donuts? It wasn't terribly long ago. In June of 2020 Dunkin' came to town. For almost 20 years, their ads have told us that "America Runs on Dunkin'." I don't know about America, but Bemidji certainly seems to run on Dunkin', at least based on the number of cars I see in the drive-thru.

But does anyone remember what Dunkin' Donuts slogan was back in the mid-80s? Do you remember the ads with Fred the Baker and his famous catchphrase?

"Time to make the donuts!"

Every morning before sunup, Fred the Baker faithfully got out of bed and made his way to work to make a fresh batch of donuts. In fact, Dunkin' claimed that every day, twice a day, Fred was busy preparing 52 varieties of fresh-baked donuts for us to choose from.

At the end of the day, Fred the Baker returned home exhausted saying, "I made the donuts," only to go to bed, wake to the sound of his alarm clock the next morning and start the entire process again. "Time to make the donuts!"

I apologize if all this talk of donuts has awakened a craving. The good news is the Dunkin' Donuts here in Bemidji is open until 10 pm tonight.

What does the endless cycle of donut-making have to do with Good Friday?

Instead of Fred the Baker, let's imagine Fred the Priest. I know, there weren't many priests in those days named Fred, but just go with it. This priest serves in the tabernacle, the place God designated under the Old Covenant where he would meet with his people and they would worship him. His job description is summarized in the passage read earlier.

"Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices" (Hebrews 10:11, NIV).

Just like Fred the Baker, we can imagine that this priest wakes up every morning and says, "Time to make the sacrifices!" At the end of a long day, he returns home saying, "I made the sacrifices." When the sun rises the next morning, the process is repeated.

The verse says that "day after day [the] priest...performs his religious duties." Each and every day his work is repeated as spelled out in Exodus 29:38-44. There God says,

"This is what you are to offer on the altar regularly each day: two lambs a year old. Offer one in the morning and the other at twilight. With the first lamb offer a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil from

pressed olives, and a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering. Sacrifice the other lamb at twilight with the same grain offering and its drink offering as in the morning—a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD. “For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the tent of meeting, before the LORD. There I will meet you and speak to you; there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by my glory” (Exo. 29:38-44, NIV).

Once in the morning and again at twilight, the burnt offering accompanied by other sacrifices was to be sacrificed according to the prescribed methods revealed in God’s law.

According to the book of Hebrews, these “same sacrifices” were offered “again and again.” The text also indicates that the priest *stood* as he performed his daily duties. This doesn’t mean he never got to take a break. It meant that his priestly work was never finished. The reason why it was never finished was because these sacrifices could “never take away sins.”

Tonight we’re looking at just a few verses of Scripture together. If we had more time, we could explore what the previous chapters had to say about the priestly ministry and the role of sacrifice under the Old Covenant. For now, let me mention one verse which tells us why the daily sacrifices could “never take away sins.” According to Hebrews 9:9 (NIV),

“The gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.”

Have you ever thought something, said something, or done something that you knew was wrong and it left you feeling dirty inside? Whether you consciously knew you were in sin and breaking God’s law, or you simply felt guilty because of what you had done, perhaps the situation left you feeling filthy. No matter what you do to try to undo your error and make things right, your conscience is still defiled.

Guilt clings to us like dirt that won’t wash off or like a stain that won’t come out no matter how hard we try. Why would God want anything to do with someone like me? How can I show my face in church? What kind of person am I if I willfully do, think, or say what I know is wrong? Can anything wash away my sin and my guilt?

The Bible says that under the Old Covenant, the priestly ministry performed day after day, again and again, could “never take away sins” (Heb. 10:11). Said another way, “It [was] impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). Again, according to Scripture, “the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper” (Heb. 9:9).

In essence, day after day the priest went to work in the temple saying, “Time to make the sacrifices!” only to come back the next day to do it all over again.

Centuries later, on a Friday in Jerusalem everything changed. Look with me at the rest of this passage found in Hebrews 10.

“Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” (Heb. 10:11-14, NIV).

The book of Hebrews is all about comparison. It’s a book of the Bible where the person and work of Jesus Christ are compared to the ministry of the old system under the Old Covenant. Note the contrast in these verses.

Whereas under the old system the priest performed his religious duties *day after day*, Jesus Christ’s priestly work was *for all time*. Whereas in the tabernacle the priest offered the same sacrifices *again and again*, Jesus the Great High Priest offered *one* single sacrifice. Whereas under the terms of the Old Covenant it was “impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins,” Jesus Christ “offered for all time one sacrifice *for sins*.” By his blood, complete forgiveness of sin was made possible.

Day after day, when the priest came to the tabernacle to perform his religious duties, he stood before the altar because his work was never complete. Again note the contrast.

“But when this priest [Jesus Christ] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, **he sat down at the right hand of God**, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool” (Heb. 10:12-13, NIV).

This priest’s work was complete. Sin was dealt with. Guilt was removed. Nothing more needed to be done, so Jesus **sat down**. It was *finished*.

At the cross, Jesus Christ offered once for all time one sacrifice for sins—his own blood. You see, at the cross, Jesus Christ was the perfect priest who offered a perfect sacrifice for sin. And because this perfect priest has offered a perfect sacrifice, this priest no longer needs to stand at the altar and perform this ministry again and again. No, this priest sat down at the right hand of God. His work was finished.

What does this mean for you and me? At the end of this passage it says,

“For by one sacrifice [Jesus Christ] has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” (Heb. 10:14, NIV).

For those who have trusted in Jesus's finished work on their behalf, the Bible says that they are "made perfect." That doesn't mean that we become sinless. It doesn't mean we won't mess up again. What it means is that through faith in Christ we can be cleansed and forgiven. The guilt we could not wash away, Jesus our Great High Priest takes away forever. Whereas before, the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper, now through Christ we are unhindered in our access to God.